

Canyon Highway Recommended

By HAL KNIGHT
Deseret News Staff Writer
SECOND IN A SERIES

Construction of a four-lane divided highway offers the best answer to growing traffic problems in Provo Canyon, according to a study by the Utah Highway Department.

However, the \$15.5 million project also would have the biggest environmental impact of any proposed "options" to deal with traffic in the area.

The need for some type of action to handle the traffic problem before it becomes "hopeless" was emphasized in the massive 400-page Highway Department study.

The proposed divided highway would have an interchange and cross the Provo River immediately above the town of Olmstead and run north of and somewhat parallel to the existing road.

This new alignment would include three interchanges within the canyon. One would be at Springdale, one serving Vivian Park and one at Wildwood.

The road would require a 240-foot right of way with a 16-foot median divider and controlled access. It would be designed for a minimum speed of 50 miles per hour. The existing road from Olmstead to Vivian Park would be resurfaced and have an operating speed of 30 miles an hour.

But however nicely this might solve traffic problems in the canyon, it has a number of drawbacks in an esthetic and environmental sense, the study admitted. Some of these would be involved in any attempt to improve the canyon road.

The four-lane highway approach would cause twice the disruption of the natural environment because of the wide right of way, the report said.

It examined three proposals for highway construction in the canyon and the traffic, environmental, economic, esthetic and ecological impact of each.

From the standpoint of handling anticipated traffic growth, the construction of a four-lane road — "very close to an interstate highway in concept" — was considered the most favorable answer in the study.

For the most part, the project would follow a different route than the existing road and would include four interchanges and a number of bridges and other structures. Sections of the existing road would be retained for local traffic.

(Two other highway proposals for the canyon, both somewhat smaller in scope, were part of the study and will be examined in subsequent Deseret News stories.)

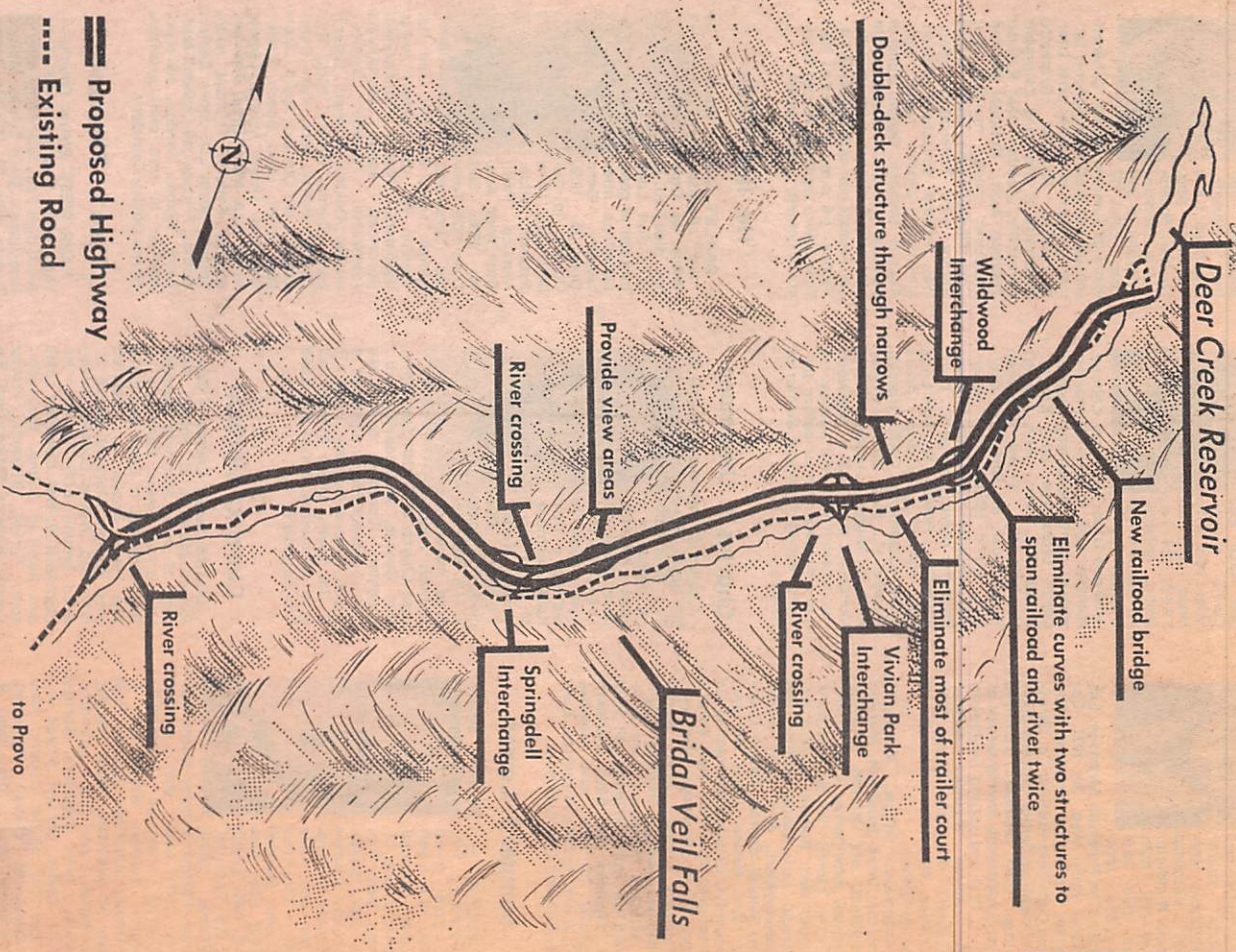
The four-lane project was described in the Highway Department report as "the only one which would essentially relieve all (traffic) deficiencies." Those were described as (1) lack of capacity for future traffic demand, (2) impending structural failure, (3) poor safety standards, and (4) unsatisfactory functional service due to a narrow road, many sharp curves and a steep grade.

The proposed highway would take some land presently used for Orem City Canyon Park, Canyon Glen Park and Rotary Park. It also would traverse some undeveloped Forest Service land.

It would take 10 acres — about 11 percent — of Orem City Canyon Park and possibly require reorientation of proposed park facilities, "but sufficient land is available for this," the study said.

The highway also would take one acre — about 15 percent — of Canyon Glen Park and the same from Rotary Park. It would not affect picnic facilities or nature trails near Bridal Veil Falls and no direct effect would be expected at Sundance.

Among the undesirable effects of this, or any other new alignment of a canyon road, would be scarring of canyon walls by sidehill cuts and fills, although it could be done in such a way as to blend with surrounding terrain after about five years of "weathering," the study said.



Map shows Provo Canyon construction that would result if four-lane highway proposed by State Highway Department were built.

In narrower portions of the canyon, the four-lane highway would become a "double deck" stacked one above the other so as not to cut into the side slopes or disturb the river bank, the report noted.

Other problems include noise from increased traffic and loss of immediate access to the highway for several canyon residents.

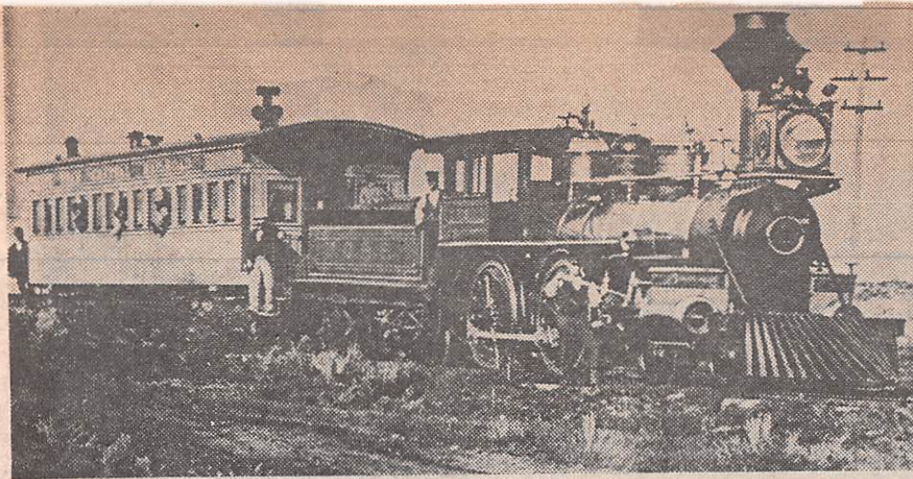
Adverse ecological effects cited in the study include removal of some streamside vegetation, destruction of some songbird habitat and temporary disturbance to fishing sites, particularly just below Deer Creek dam.

It was noted that because of the narrow canyon, the disruption during construction would be greater than normally expected in a highway building operation, but most of it would not be permanent.

Among steps to restore the canyon after construction of the four-lane highway would be "terracing" of cuts and replanting of vegetation where possible and provision of game crossing and drinking sites.

Little was said in the report about changes in the Provo River channel due to the new di-

vided highway alignment except that the existing meander pattern would be followed as close as possible and esthetics would be carefully watched.



An Idaho man submitted picture of old train to centennial series.

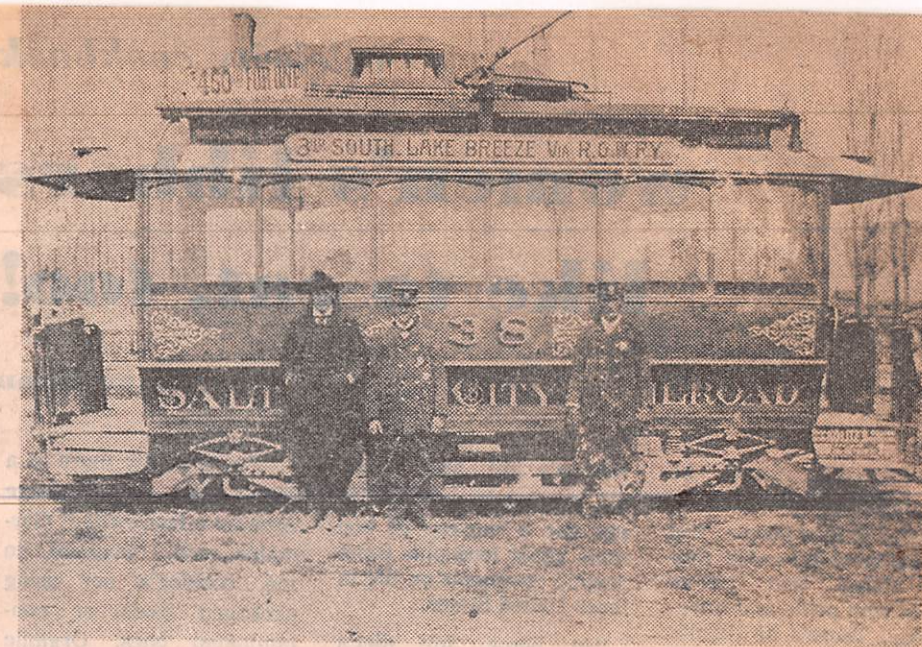
railroad picture wins \$10

THIS TRAIN did not carry many passengers at a time, but it was an important part of the Utah Central Railroad. The picture was submitted by Arthur Petersen, 907 W. Custer, Pocatello, Idaho, 83201 in The Salt Lake Tribune Centennial series, and Mr. Petersen will receive \$10.

As part of its centennial year observance, The Tribune is publishing old pho-

topgraphs from yesteryear, as weekly features in Home Magazine.

THE PHOTOGRAPHS sought by The Tribune are in two categories. For pictures, taken at any time and which have a connection with The Tribune, the newspaper will pay \$20, if published. For photographs showing progress in the state or a community and taken before statehood (Jan. 4, 1896), the award will be \$10.



There are only two passengers in this Salt Lake City Railroad car as operators posed for picture — must have been end of line.

pictures from the past transport of long ago

IN THE OLD days street transportation had both a motorman and a conductor, according to this old photograph of a Salt Lake City railroad car.

The destination board says "3rd South, Lake Breeze Via R.G.W. Ry., but where Lake Breeze is or was is not indicated.

This picture, submitted by Marlow R. Peacock, 1835 Severn Dr., Salt Lake City 84117, qualifies for The Salt Lake Tribune Centennial series, and Mr. Peacock will receive \$10.

AS PART of its centennial year observance, The Tribune is publishing old photographs from yesteryear, as weekly features in Home Magazine.

The photographs sought by The Tribune are in two categories. For pictures taken at any time and which have a connection with The Tribune, the newspaper will pay \$20, if published. For photographs showing progress in the state or a community and taken before statehood (Jan. 4, 1896), the award will be \$10.

Pictures found suitable will be copied and the print will be retained by The Tribune.

IF YOU HAVE photographs you would like to submit, write your name and address on the back of each.

Mail entries to Old Pictures, The Salt Lake Tribune, P.O. Box 867, Salt Lake City, Utah 84110.

